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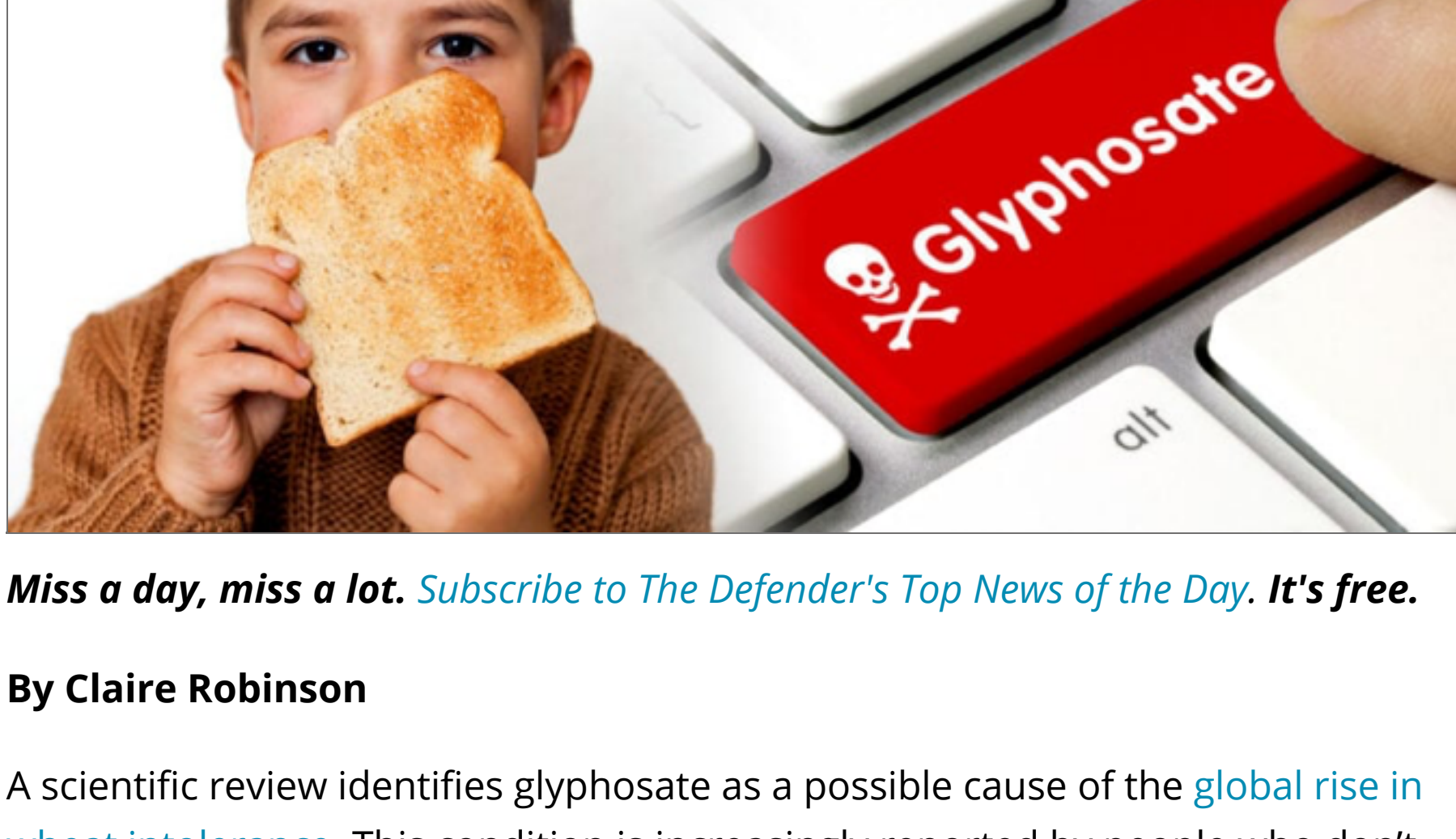
12/22/23 • BIG CHEMICAL VIEWS

Is Gluten Making You Sick? Or Is It the Glyphosate Sprayed on Wheat?

A scientific review identified glyphosate as a possible cause of the global rise in wheat intolerance. While no genetically modified glyphosate-tolerant wheat is commercially planted in North America, glyphosate-based herbicides are commonly sprayed on non-GMO wheat before it is harvested to dry it out.

By GMWatch

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By Claire Robinson

A scientific review identifies glyphosate as a possible cause of the [global rise in wheat intolerance](#). This condition is increasingly reported by people who don't have a diagnosis of celiac disease (a condition where your immune system attacks your own tissues when you eat the protein gluten).

The review authors, Jacqueline A. Barnett and Deanna L. Gibson from the University of British Columbia, note that wheat intolerance has grown in parallel with the spread of the Western diet, which includes high levels of refined carbohydrates.

Yet clinical trials have shown that gluten from wheat is not responsible for causing symptoms in healthy individuals, suggesting that something else is inducing symptoms. The authors hypothesize that the "something else" might be [glyphosate](#).

While no genetically modified (GM) glyphosate-tolerant wheat is commercially planted in North America, glyphosate-based herbicides are often sprayed on non-GM wheat pre-harvest to desiccate it ("dry it down").

Glyphosate works as a weedkiller by inhibiting the shikimate pathway, a pathway exclusive to plants and bacteria but not found in mammals, including humans. For this reason, glyphosate was historically claimed to be non-toxic to mammals.

But our guts are full of friendly bacteria that help us digest food and function as a healthy immune system. Therefore, Barnett and Gibson state that [glyphosate could impact gut bacteria](#), causing "dysbiosis," an unhealthy imbalance in gut bacterial populations.

Indeed, as they point out, some studies in rats have shown that exposure to Roundup and glyphosate causes dysbiosis, even at relatively low levels that regulators assume are safe to ingest.

The dysbiosis effects found include reducing populations of a type of gut bacterium called Rothia. Some Rothia species have been identified as playing a critical role in the degradation of gluten and may play a role in the prevention of celiac disease.

The authors state:

"These findings suggest that exposure to glyphosate, either alone or in a commercial preparation, at doses previously deemed safe for human health, may have profound effects on [microbiome development](#) and may be an environmental trigger in the development of celiac disease."

After Barnett and Gibson published their review, a 2021 study in rats by Mesnage et al. confirmed that the mechanism by which both Roundup and its declared "active" ingredient glyphosate cause [dysbiosis](#) is indeed by inhibiting the [shikimate pathway](#) in gut bacteria.

The gut microbiome was disrupted at all dose levels tested, including those assumed by regulators not to have any adverse effect.

There are also differences in the effects of the different formulations, leading Barnett and Gibson to conclude that herbicide adjuvants (added ingredients besides the declared "active" ingredient) may cause alterations to the gut microbiome and could have synergistic effects when combined with glyphosate.

The authors point out that some of the changes in gut bacterial species found from exposure to glyphosate or glyphosate-based herbicides are linked in other research with certain diseases of the gut, like irritable bowel syndrome, celiac disease and even colon cancer.

Obesity is also known to be triggered by dysbiosis, as are [mental health issues](#). The authors note that exposure to Roundup has been associated with increased anxiety and depression-like behaviors in mice, which correlated with decreases in certain gut bacteria.

The authors state:

"Glyphosate may be a critical environmental trigger in the etiology of several disease states, including celiac disease, inflammatory bowel disease and irritable bowel syndrome.

"Glyphosate exposure may also have consequences for mental health, including anxiety and depression, through alterations in the gut microbiome."

However, they add that much of the research on glyphosate's effects on the microbiome suffers from methodological weaknesses such as unrealistically high doses, insufficient duration of exposure, and an over-reliance on animal models, which may not translate well to humans.

They conclude that "Future long-term studies examining physiologically relevant doses in both healthy and genetically susceptible populations are warranted to determine the real risk posed to human health."

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'Friendly' bacteria impacted by glyphosate

In their review, Barnett and Gibson cite research showing that opportunistic pathogens are more resistant to glyphosate compared with the "friendly" bacteria in our gut.

Studies reveal that glyphosate and glyphosate-based formulations such as Roundup differ in their effects on gut bacteria.

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The research that anyone can carry out

GMWatch would add that given the ethical impossibility of deliberately dosing humans with herbicides in controlled experiments and the practical impossibility of locking experimental human subjects away and feeding them a glyphosate-free diet over a long-term period, the question of the real risk posed by glyphosate-based herbicides to human health is unlikely to be solved any time soon by scientists working in laboratories.

However — and this may be the true value of this review — anyone suffering from the diseases mentioned by the authors, including the rather generalized but nonetheless real condition of wheat intolerance, doesn't need to wait for science that may never be done.

They can do their own research by minimizing their intake of glyphosate-contaminated foods and seeing if they notice improvements.

This would entail avoiding GMO ingredients like corn and soy and grains that are habitually desiccated with glyphosate, such as wheat and oats, and favoring [organically grown foods](#).

I'm reminded of a friend who, when I first met him many years ago, confidently informed me that he was "allergic to fruits and veg."

I had come across people who were genuinely allergic to specific foods, but the general nature of his claim alerted me to the possibility that it wasn't the fruits and veg that produced the reaction — an unnerving rash around his mouth, a burning mouth and throat, and digestive issues — but the [pesticides](#) they were grown with.

A series of experiments followed in which he ate all the foods he thought he was allergic to, this time grown organically. The result: no unpleasant reactions and the beginning of a healthier diet.

Originally published by [GMWatch](#).

Claire Robinson is an editor at GMWatch.

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BChristine
21 hours ago  

This Toxic Glyphosate surrounds us. Despite doing everything we can to stay away from it, we all have some level of it in our bodies because it is so enveloped in our environment. The key is awareness - especially in our food. Eat organic whole food and grow some yourself if you can. Do not use Pesticides and Herbicides containing RoundUp, and alert your neighbors if they do. Take your shoes off at the door to your home to cut down on spreading throughout.

You don't need to be a fanatic about it ... just being aware and doing what you can will help. It's shameful we have to live in such a toxic environment created solely by man.

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M

Michael Moore 
20 hours ago

I think it is worth mentioning that celiac disease was named by an Ancient Greek physician. In the last century the only things being taught to medical school students about celiac disease were three lies, and there were no blood tests for celiac until the last turn of the century. In 1971, a gastroenterologist diagnosed me with "a nervous stomach", which apparently my father was too. The HLA Haplotype called the "Ancestral Haplotype", containing the riskiest gene for celiac disease is at least 30,000 years old, and is the longest string of unaltered human genome, and grains were only cultivated starting around 10,000 years ago. I have read that there are about 450 different gene loci in the human genome that affect gluten sensitivity. Only a small minority of people with Celiac disease are diagnosed.

Also, I would like to point out that a Mayo Clinic study says that all humans have an immune reaction to eating wheat for 6 months to a year after every ingestion. Dr. Alessio Fasano's research showed that after every ingestion of wheat, every human has a temporary increase in intestinal permeability. People with celiac disease have a version of another gene on another chromosome that causes greater intestinal permeability, as do some people without celiac disease.

So glyphosate definitely has a negative effect and I have no quarrel with this article, but the people putting forth the idea that celiac disease was unknown to them before the use of glyphosate I think is coincidental and has to do with knowledge about celiac disease finally gaining traction via the internet just before my correct diagnosis in 2007.

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S

symbiotic brain 
21 hours ago

I first read about this in either book Wheat Belly or Grain Brain many years ago. The author substituted organically grown ancient grains for a period of time, and discovered his gluten allergies subsided.

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Norseman 
a day ago

They are lying to you in this article. Glyphosate is rarely used in wheat to "dry it down." That is absolute nonsense. Nearly all wheat is harvested after it dries naturally.

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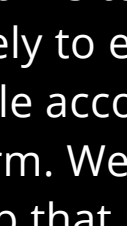


S

symbiotic brain 
21 hours ago

The idea of desiccating wheat via spraying with Glyphosate originated in Scotland many years ago, and is still used (particularly by large scale farmers) to this day where I live.

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L

Linda 
21 hours ago

Your comment makes me see, then, I'm from Scotland, and ate toast twice a day all of my life, to me, suddenly become gluten intolerant around a decade ago.

A few years before I became gluten intolerant I switched to whole meal bread. I often wonder if eating the outer husk of wheat meal I had much more exposure to glyphosates?? Would love to know if wholemeal bread eaters have more gluten intolerance than white bread eaters.

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L

Linda 
21 hours ago

Even if it is the bacterial glyphosate from other products that causes it, the fact is that once the cuticular layer protecting the gut wall is compromised things (partially digested proteins such as gluten start leaking through). Gluten is not a problem for anyone if it stays in the gut. It's when it finds it's way into the bloodstream that it wreaks havoc.

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HSMom
a day ago

Glyphosate is in the air, water, and gasoline, too. Yes, eating organic may help but it may not be the cure-all for those with gastrointestinal problems. ION-Biome, Fulvic acid, and Humic acid are easy additions to help with gut permeability. There are many others like glutamine which is probably the least expensive.

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